

Document No. <u>6</u>
No Change in Class. <input type="checkbox"/>
Class. Changed to: TS S C
Next Review Date: <u>19 November 1980</u>
Auth: <u>MI 70-3</u>
Date: <u>2/21/80</u> By: <u>009256</u>

**NSC BRIEFING**

**THAILAND**

I. There are increasing indications that Sarit's control over the ruling military group is weakening to the point where some of his disgruntled military supporters might be tempted to try a coup.

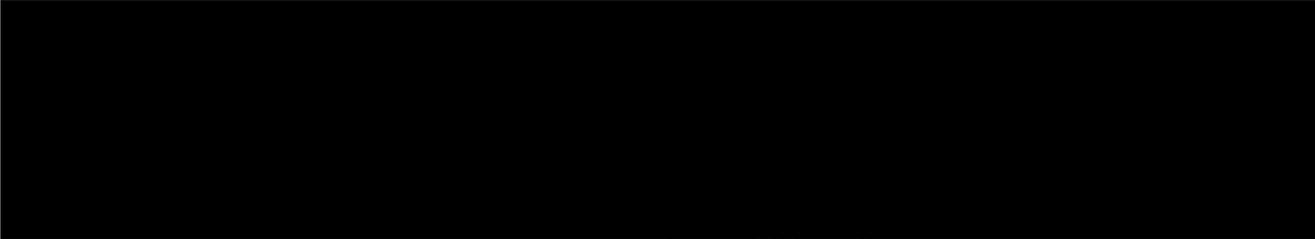
A. Ever since the ailing Sarit's hasty return from England and abrogation of the constitution last month, he has insisted on holding all the reins of government,



B. He has also antagonized some key military leaders by not consulting them on matters affecting their personal interests.

C. Although Sarit may soon install a provisional cabinet with himself as premier, this in itself will probably do little to halt the current drift.

II. A big factor is Sarit's precarious health, which militates against the firm leadership necessary to keep ambitious underlings under control.



III. Should Sarit fall from power, <sup>at present it appears that</sup> his most likely successor would be General Prapat, the former interior minister.

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- A. Prapat, [REDACTED] is strongly opposed in the military group by the relatively moderate, reformist elements best epitomized by former Premier Thanom.
- B. Both the Prapat and the Thanom factions have been critical of Sarit's recent performance.

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